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Letter dated 23 February 2009 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Burkina Faso to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a report on the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Burkina Faso in September 2008 (see annex). The document was prepared under my responsibility, after consultation with the other members of the Council.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Paul Robert **Tiendrébéogo**
Ambassador
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

09-24813 (E) 020309 050309

Annex to the letter dated 23 February 2009 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Burkina Faso to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: English]

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Burkina Faso (September 2008)

Introduction

During the month of September 2008, under the presidency of Burkina Faso, the Security Council held 29 meetings to discuss African, Asian, European and American issues. Seventeen of those meetings, including two high-level ones, were public. The Council adopted five resolutions, four presidential statements and six statements to the press.

Africa

United Nations Mission in Liberia

On 9 September, the Council had a private meeting with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), followed by consultations. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Liberia, Ellen Margrethe Løj, briefed the Council on the situation on the ground and the proposal made by the Secretary-General in his latest report to reduce the UNMIL military component and to increase the police component.

On 29 September, the Council adopted resolution 1836 (2008), by which it extended the mandate of UNMIL for one more year.

Sudan sanctions Committee

The Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan orally briefed the Council during consultations on 11 September. He stated that a written report to be submitted to the Council was being finalized and would probably include the results of the inquiry into the attack on the convoy of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur that took place in the country.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Following the resumption of fighting in North and South Kivu, the Council met on 12 September to hear an update from the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet, on the situation on the ground. The Council issued a statement to the press on the issue after the consultations.

Peace and security in Africa

The Council held two consultations on peace and security in Africa.

On 17 September, the Council heard a briefing on the United Nations fact-finding mission to Djibouti and Eritrea that was requested by the Council. The Council noted that the mission went to Djibouti, but was not granted visas to visit Eritrea.

On 19 September, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Haile Menkerios, briefed the Council on the situation in Zimbabwe, after the signature of the framework agreement on power-sharing between the main political parties. The Council welcomed the agreement and commended the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, for his efforts in this regard.

United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad

On 19 September, the Council held a private meeting with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), followed by consultations.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Victor Da Silva Angelo, updated the Council on the progress recorded in both countries, in particular on the activities of MINURCAT, the deployment of the Détachement intégré de sécurité and cooperation with the European operation (EUFOR). He also updated the Council on the implementation of the agreement reached on 13 August 2007 on electoral reform in Chad, and the comprehensive peace agreement signed on 21 June 2008 in Libreville by the Central African parties.

On 24 September, the Council adopted resolution 1834 (2008), by which it extended the mandate of MINURCAT for six months.

On the same day, the Council was briefed by Mr. Javier Solana on the activities of the European force in Chad and the Central African Republic. He urged the United Nations to find quickly a solution for the replacement of EUFOR, whose mandate would definitively end on 15 March 2009.

Asia and the Middle East

The situation in the Middle East including the Palestinian question

The Council examined this issue twice during the month of September 2008.

On 18 September, in consultations, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East peace process, Robert Serry, briefed the Council on the negotiations taking place between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, in particular the talks of 26 and 31 August and 16 September 2008. He also stated that relations between the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon were improving, while the blockade imposed by Israel in the Gaza Strip was still a concern.

At the request of the Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Arab League, the Security Council held a debate on 26 September, at the ministerial level. Although many delegations focused their statements on the settlements that are still going on in the Palestinian territories, others spoke about the global situation in the Middle East.

Non-proliferation

During consultations on 11 September, the Council examined the report of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006), on nuclear activities in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On 27 September, the Council adopted resolution 1835 (2008) on this matter.

Myanmar

On 11 September, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, Ibrahim Gambari, briefed the Council on his most recent visit to Myanmar, including areas affected by cyclone Nargis, where he met with governmental officials but was unable to have talks with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the opposition party.

Afghanistan

On 22 September, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1833 (2008), by which it extended the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force for a period of 12 months beyond 13 October 2008.

Europe

Georgia

The situation in Georgia was not discussed by the Council during the month of September 2008. Nevertheless, on 9 September, one delegation introduced a draft resolution to impose an arms embargo against Georgia. No action was taken on that draft.

Cyprus

On 4 September, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2008/34), by which it welcomed the launch of fully-fledged negotiations between the leaders of the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots aimed at the reunification of Cyprus, as well as the appointment of Alexander Downer as Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for Cyprus.

Meeting with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

On 26 September, the Council heard a briefing from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland and current Chairman of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Alexander Stubb, on the activities of that Organization and its cooperation with the Security Council, in particular in the context of conflict prevention and settlement. He also briefed the Council on Afghanistan, Georgia and Kosovo.

International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

On 29 September, the Council adopted resolution 1837 (2008), by which it extended the terms of office of the permanent judges and the ad litem judges of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, respectively until 31 December 2010 (for judges of the Appeals Chamber) and 31 December 2009 (for Trial Chamber and ad litem judges), or until the completion of their cases if sooner.

Americas

Haiti

On 12 September, the Council heard a briefing from the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on the situation in Haiti, after the cyclones and hurricanes that seriously affected the country.

The members of the Council expressed their deep condolences and sympathy to the people and Government of Haiti and invited the international community to provide aid to the country. They also welcomed the appointment of Michelle Duvivier Pierre-Louis as Prime Minister of Haiti.

High-level meeting

On 23 September, under the chairmanship of the President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré, the Council held a high-level meeting on the item entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security: mediation and settlement of disputes".

The meeting was attended by the Secretary-General, the Head of State of Panama, the Prime Minister of Croatia, the Foreign Ministers of Belgium, South Africa, Indonesia, Italy and France, the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, the Minister of State for Africa, Asia and United Nations Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as the Permanent Representatives of Viet Nam, the United States of America, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Costa Rica and the Deputy Permanent Representative of China.

In his opening remarks, President Compaoré stated that, by organizing this meeting, Burkina Faso wanted to highlight the importance of mediation as a means of pacific settlement of disputes. For him, to be successful, mediation required:

- The involvement of the parties in conflict
- The high quality of the mediator (independence, objectivity, knowledge of both the causes of the dispute and the ground)
- Proximity (priority of subregional and regional organizations)
- The support of the international community, the United Nations for instance, the Security Council in particular).

The former Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, Lakhdar Brahimi, as an invited expert, noted that although they were only undertaken and financed by their initiators, mediations contributed to settle many conflicts around the world. He therefore invited the international community to own and to promote such a practice.

A presidential statement was adopted by the Council at the close of the debate (S/PRST/2008/36), focusing on the importance of mediation and its need of support. In it, the Council requested the Secretary-General to ensure that all mediation activities undertaken within the United Nations system are in conformity with the Charter. It also noted the importance of women in the settlement of disputes, and requested the Secretary-General, when appointing mediators, to take the gender aspect into account. The Council finally requested the Secretary-General to report to

it, within six months from the adoption of the resolution, on mediation and all relevant support activities, and to make recommendations to strengthen its effectiveness.

Other activities

Following the terrorist attacks perpetrated respectively in Lebanon (10 and 29 September), Pakistan (20 September), Spain (20 and 21 September) and the Syrian Arab Republic (27 September), the Council adopted either presidential or press statements to condemn those attacks and to express its solidarity with the families of the victims, and the people and Governments of those countries.

On 18 September, the President of the Security Council offered a luncheon, chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, Alain Yoda, in honour of the Secretary-General. Apart from the Security Council members, the Secretary-General's staff also attended the luncheon. The Secretary-General took the opportunity to share views with the Security Council members on the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia, the situation in Bolivia, the United Nations-African Union panel and the important side events that were to occur during the General Assembly's general debate.

Conclusion

The Security Council had a very busy month of September with the meetings listed above. Nevertheless, Burkina Faso assumed its term of President of the Council successfully.